Agenda for Dialogue on Transnationalism and Community Development
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Thursday, March 20th 2003
9:00 a.m. - Noon

I. Welcome, Introductions and Framing the Day
Eugene Miller, Center for the Study of Philanthropy/CUNY
Salvatore LaSpada, The Rockefeller Foundation
Carlo Dade, The Inter-American Foundation

II. Overview on Transnationalism and North American Transnational Communities

A. Transnationalism – An Introduction. Speaker: Alejandro Portes, Professor of Sociology, Princeton University

B. Film Clip, "Soy Andina," the story of a Peruvian woman's journey back to her birthplace to host a traditional *fiesta patronal*. It is also the story of Andean immigrants in New York/New Jersey and an exploration of hybrid identity – a tribute to maintaining cultural traditions in the shadow of skyscrapers.

C. Community Development in Transnational Communities: Expanding Opportunities for Domestic and International Funders. Speaker: Carlo Dade, Inter-American Foundation

III. Discussion and Dialogue

The purpose of this dialogue is to gain insights into, guide thinking about, and forge new alliances for community development work in transnational communities. Participants will be asked to share their experiences and views on working across borders in linked, transnational communities; what new lines of work are needed to meet the needs of transnational communities; and what the obstacles are – funding and otherwise – to expanding these new lines of work.

Background

Transnational migration is a process in which human, financial, and social capital flows back and forth between sending and receiving communities, thus greatly impacting social and economic development in both the sending and receiving communities. Leading domestic and international foundations, development agencies, nonprofits and governments increasingly are beginning to consider the development impact of these linkages between migrant/ immigrant communities and their communities of origin and also have begun examining the role of these various dynamics in grassroots community development. Emerging from this examination is a redefinition of the concept of 'community development,' which focuses thinking on how to use and leverage the pathways and linkages created by transnational migration to improve community development work.

Some main features of this redefinition of 'community development' are that:

- funding grassroots development benefits *both* migrant/immigrant communities in the U.S. and communities of origin;

- migrants/immigrants and organizations working with them are natural partners in grassroots/community development;

- transnational dynamics and actors are multiple and include not only remittances but also social and intellectual capital flows.

Outcomes of the dialogue will be to:

1. promote dialogue and critical thinking around the issue of transnational communities and grassroots development.

2. build relationships and partnerships among US-based constituents, such as Home Town Associations, migrant organizations, foundations, and NGOs.

3. encourage participants currently engaged with these issues to recognize and respond to new challenges, as well as encourage new actors to become involved.

List of Attendees

Foundations and Grantmaker Organizations
1. Council on Foundations
2. Samuel Fels Fund
3. Ford Foundation
4. New Jersey Regional Association of Grant Makers
5. New York Foundation
6. New York Regional Association of Grant Makers
7. Pan-American Development Foundation
8. Rockefeller Foundation
9. Surdna Foundation

Immigrant/Diaspora Organizations
1. Alianza Dominicana
2. American India Foundation
3. Asociación Salvadoreño Americana de Long Island
4. Asociación Tepeyac
5. Caribbean-American Chamber of Commerce
6. Casa México
7. Fédération des Associations Régionales Haïtiennes a l'étranger
8. Hispanic Federation
9. National Coalition for Haitian Rights

Government
1. Department of Immigrant Affairs, Mayor's Office, City of New York
2. Department of Youth and Community Development, Mayor's Office, City of New York
3. Inter-American Foundation
4. USAID

Other
1. Inter-American Dialogue
2. Migration Policy Institute
3. Professor Alejandro Portes, Princeton University
4. Professor Robert Smith, Barnard/Columbia